第十九話 洗手

CH.19: RETIREMENT

BROTHER LIU, HAVE YOU FOUND MY DISCIPLE?

I'VE ALSO SENT PEOPLE TO COMB THROUGH THE CITY
UNFORTUNATELY NO. WE'VE SEARCHED THROUGH THE PLACE AND DIDN'T SEE HER

WHERE ON EARTH IS SHE?

HAAA
HAA

HAA
HHAA

AH

THIS SHOULD BE FAR AWAY ENOUGH! THEY WOULDN'T THINK TO SEARCH THIS FAR!

YOU MUST BE TIRED. WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A REST?

OK

YOU'RE AWAKE!

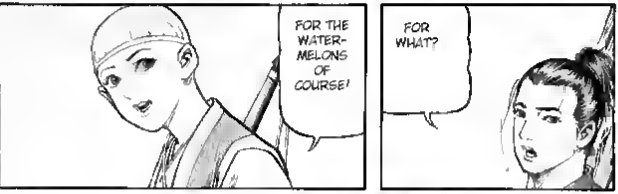
THEY'RE DEFINITELY GOING TO TORTURE THE HELL OUT OF ME

I GOT TO YHANK YOU FOR YESTERDAY. OTHERWISE I WOULD HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY THOSE QINGCHENG SCOUNDRELS

YOU WERE STILL AWAKE

SO HE SAW ME CARRYING HIM AND RUNNING OUT OF THE CITY...
THAT'S KIND OF
THEY DON'T HURT AS MUCH NOW
H-HOW ARE YOUR WOUNDS?
GREAT! GREAT! WELL, YOU LOST A LOT OF BLOOD. LET ME GO AND SEE IF I CAN FIND SOME WATER FOR YOU!

OK. BROTHER LINGHU DO YOU HAVE ANY MONEY WITH YOU?
WHY DON'T YOU GO GET SOME?
ON OUR WAY HERE, I SAW LOTS OF WATERMELONS IN THE FIELD TO THE LEFT


FOR THE WATERMELONS OF COURSE!
FOR WHAT?

YOU CAN JUST GO PICK SOME. THERE'S NOBODY LIVING CLOSE BY. THE OWNER MUST LIVE FAR AWAY. WHO ARE YOU GOING TO BUY FROM?
DID YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO PAY FOR THEM?

WE CAN'T DO THAT. IF WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY WE CAN BEG ALMS FROM THEM. I AM SURE THEY WILL BE KIND ENOUGH TO GIVE US A WATERMELON.
BUT TO TAKE WITHOUT CONSENT IS... IS STEALING. THAT'S JUST WRONG

NAH, HOW CAN I ADMONISH HER FOR BEING SILLY WHEN SHE'S BEEN HELPING ME OUT TO THIS EXTEND
YOU LITTLE.
I'LL GO AND GET SOME WATER-MELONS NOW! SO PLEASE STAY PUT!

BROTHER LINGHU WANTED TO HAVE SOME WATERMELON, BUT THESE WATERMELONS ALL BELONG TO SOMEONE.
HOW CAN I STEAL FROM HIM?

AND THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYONE AROUND AT ALL SO I CAN'T EVEN BEG FOR ALMS...

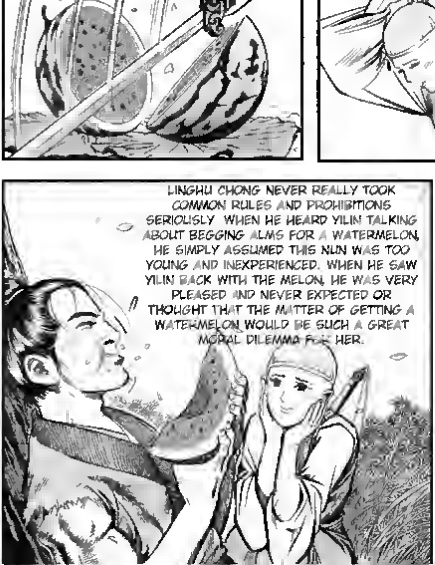
DEAR BUDDHA, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO STEAL. IT'S ALL BECAUSE BROTHER LINGHU... BROTHER LINGHU WANTS TO EAT SOME WATER-MELON.
WHAT KIND OF SILLY REASON IS THAT!

HE HAS SAVED MY LIFE WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL IF I HAVE TO END UP IN HELL AND NEVER BE REBORN AGAIN?
THE ONE WHO COMMITS THE CRIME WILL BE THE ONE RESPONSIBLE IT'S ME, YILIN, WHO BROKE THE PROHIBITION IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BROTHER LINGHU

BROTHER LINGHU HERE'S THE WATERMELON!

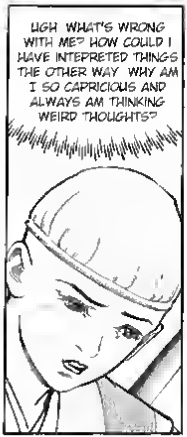
OH, NICE
GOOD GOING
THERE!

LET ME CUT
IT FOR YOU


LINGHU CHONG NEVER REALLY TOOK COMMON RULES AND PROHIBITIONS SERIOUSLY. WHEN HE HEARD YILIN TALKING ABOUT BEGGING ALMS FOR A WATERMELON, HE SIMPLY ASSUMED THIS NUN WAS TOO YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED. WHEN HE SAW YILIN BACK WITH THE MELON, HE WAS VERY PLEASED AND NEVER EXPECTED OR THOUGHT THAT THE MATTER OF GETTING A WATERMELON WOULD BE SUCH A GREAT MORAL DILEMMA FOR HER.

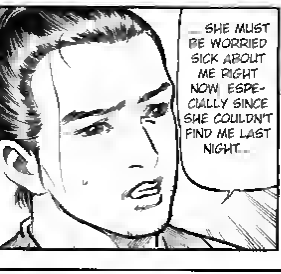
WOW, HOW PRETTY!
LOOK, HOW PRETTY! DID YOU SEE THAT?
T-THAT'S JUST EMBARASSING!
WHY DID HE SUDDENLY SAY I AM PRETTY?
!?

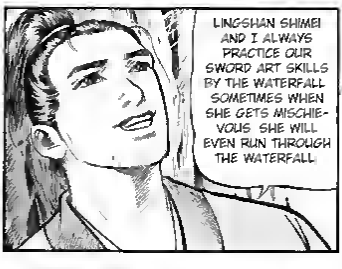
BROTHER LINGHU IS A GENTLEMAN, NO WAY WOULD HE SAY THAT KIND OF THINGS! BEING ALONE WITH A MAN HAVE MADE ME TOO GUARDED. EVEN IF THEY'RE BOTH MEN, HE'S OBVIOUSLY DIFFERENT FROM SOMEONE LIKE TIAN BOGUANG!


UGH. WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? HOW COULD I HAVE INTERPRETED THINGS THE OTHER WAY. WHY AM I SO CAPRICIOUS AND ALWAYS AM THINKING WEIRD THOUGHTS?

HE WAS ONLY TALKING ABOUT THE RAINBOW...

WE HAVE A WATERFALL BY THE SIDE OF THE JADE MAIDEN PEAK AT MOUNT HUA TOO IT'S EVEN BIGGER THAN THIS ONE IT LOOKS SIMILAR THOUGH
AFTER THE PAST FEW DAYS OF CONTINUOUS RAIN, THERE'S WATERFALL EVERYWHERE IN THE MOUNTAINS.


... SHE MUST BE WORRIED SICK ABOUT ME RIGHT NOW, ESPECIALLY SINCE SHE COULDN'T FIND ME LAST NIGHT...


LINGSHAN SHIMEI AND I ALWAYS PRACTICE OUR SWORD ART SKILLS BY THE WATERFALL. SOMETIMES WHEN SHE GETS MISCHIEVOUS SHE WILL EVEN RUN THROUGH THE WATERFALL.

LINGSHAN SHIMEI...

YILIN RECALLED HOW YUE LINGSHAN FAINTED UPON HEARING THAT LINGHU CHONG HAS DIED AND REALIZED THAT THOSE TWO MUST HAVE BEEN REAL CLOSE WITH EACH OTHER. UPON THAT, THOUGHT, FOR SOME REASON, SHE FELT A GREAT PAIN IN HER HEART AS IF SOMEONE HAD JUST GIVEN IT A HARD PUNCH.

SO THEY TREATED ME LIKE THEIR OWN SON
I WAS MUCH OLDER THAN SHE WAS SO I ALWAYS CARRIED HER OUT TO PICK FRUITS AND CHASE RABBITS
WE GREW UP TOGETHER MASTER AND MA'AM DON'T HAVE A SON,

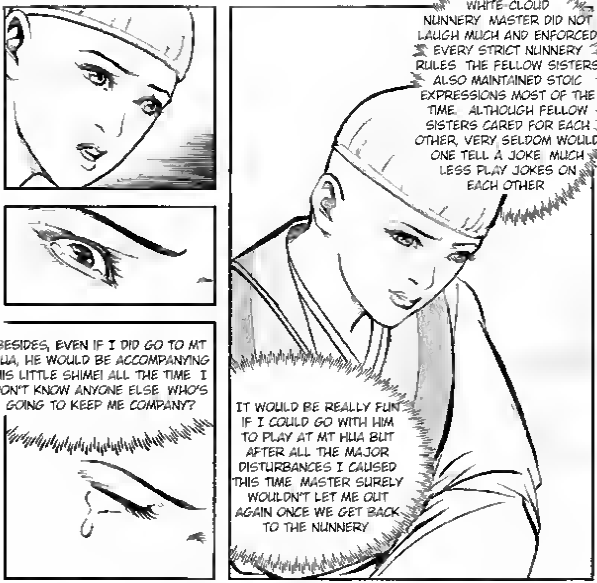
I WAS AN ORPHAN 15 YEARS AGO, WHEN THE MASTER AND HIS WIFE TOOK ME AS A DISCIPLE OUT OF KINDNESS. THE LITTLE SHIMEI WAS ONLY 3

W-WERE YOU ON REALLY GOOD TERMS WITH LING-SHAN SHIMEI...?

LITTLE SHIMEI IS JUST LIKE MY OWN SISTER.

WE HAVE LOTS OF FELLOW DISCIPLES. WITH TWENTY SOME PEOPLE, IT'S REALLY LIVELY. AFTER PRACTICES, WE JUST PLAY AROUND IN GROUPS.
WHAT A PITY! IF YOU WEREN'T A DISCIPLE OF MASTER DINGYI, I COULD HAVE BEGGED MADAM TO TAKE YOU IN AS HER DISCIPLE.

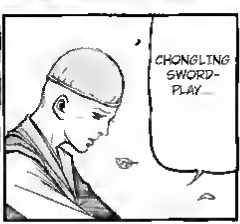
OH... ...I WAS ALSO AN ORPHAN. I WAS TAKEN IN BY MY MASTER AND HAD BEEN A NUN EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD.


IN THE WHITE CLOUD NUNNERY MASTER DID NOT LAUGH MUCH AND ENFORCED EVERY STRICT NUNNERY RULES. THE FELLOW SISTERS ALSO MAINTAINED STOIC EXPRESSIONS MOST OF THE TIME. ALTHOUGH FELLOW SISTERS CARED FOR EACH OTHER, VERY SELDOM WOULD ONE TELL A JOKE MUCH LESS PLAY JOKES ON EACH OTHER
IT WOULD BE REALLY FUN IF I COULD GO WITH HIM TO PLAY AT MT HUA BUT AFTER ALL THE MAJOR DISTURBANCES I CAUSED THIS TIME MASTER SURELY WOULDN'T LET ME OUT AGAIN ONCE WE GET BACK TO THE NUNNERY
BESIDES, EVEN IF I DID GO TO MT HUA, HE WOULD BE ACCOMPANYING HIS LITTLE SHIMEI ALL THE TIME. I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE WHO'S GOING TO KEEP ME COMPANY?
WE'D USE THE WATERFALLS TO ACT AS THE ENEMY'S INTERNAL ENERGY AND USE OUR SWORDPLAY TO DIRECT ITS MOMENTUM BACK AT ITSELF AS THOUGH CAUSING THE ENEMY'S ATTACK TO DEFLECT BACK ON THE USER
SHIMEI AND I ARE CURRENTLY DEVELOPING OUR OWN SWORDPLAY

LITTLE SHIMEI CALLED IT CHONGLING SWORDPLAD SINCE WE BOTH DEVELOPED IT

WHAT DO YOU CALL THIS SWORDPLAY?

I SEE. SINCE IT HAS BOTH YOUR NAMES IN IT, PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE WILL KNOW YOU BOTH CREATED IT.


CHONGLING SWORD-PLAY...

BY THE WAY, IT'S BEST IF YOU DON'T TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT ANYWAY. IT'S JUST CHILDISH MUSINGS AFTER ALL.

NAH, IT'S JUST A NAME SHE CAME UP WITH ON A WHIM. BESIDES, IT'S MAINLY FOR MUCKING ABOUT, AND HAS NO ACTUAL COMBAT VALUE AS A SWORDPLAY

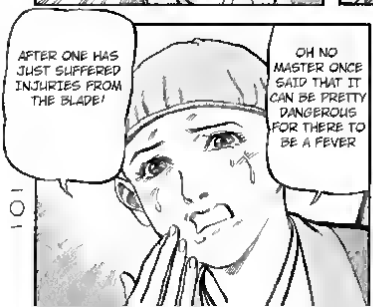
MY BODY'S FEELING RATHER HOT FOR SOME REASON...

W-WHAT'S WRONG? ARE THE WOUNDS ACTING UP AGAIN?

Y-YOU HAVE A FEVER...!

BROTHER LINGHU!...

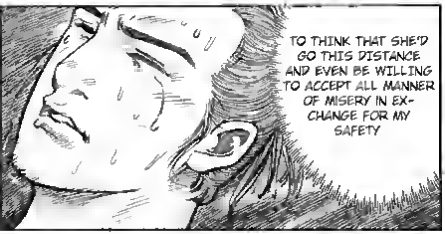
HM...

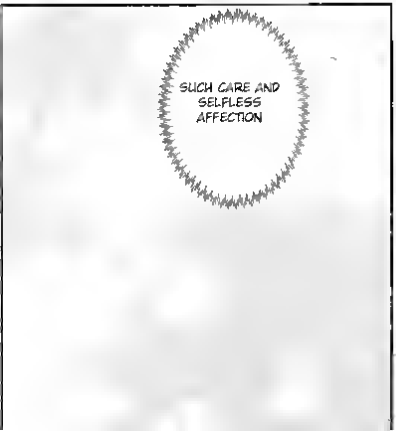

AFTER ONE HAS JUST SUFFERED INJURIES FROM THE BLADE!
OH NO MASTER ONCE SAID THAT IT CAN BE PRETTY DANGEROUS FOR THERE TO BE A FEVER

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!

YOU CAN CHANGE ME INTO A SWINE, OR SEND ME TO HELL
I BEG YOU TO TAKE AWAY ALL THE PAIN AND SUFFERING FROM BIG BROTHER LINGHU AND TRANSFER ALL OF IT TO ME.
BODHISATTVA GUANYIN,
BUT PLEASE ALLEVIATE BROTHER LINGHU OF HIS MISERY.

FOR ALL LIVING CREATURES THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFICULTIES BUT THE HOLY AND WONDERFUL POWER FROM BODHISATTVA GUANYIN WILL HELP US GET THROUGH ALL OF THEM.


TO THINK THAT SHE'D GO THIS DISTANCE AND EVEN BE WILLING TO ACCEPT ALL MANNER OF MISERY IN EXCHANGE FOR MY SAFETY


SUCH CARE AND SELFLESS AFFECTION

THOUGH MASTER AND MAAM TREAT ME WELL, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE RECEIVED

SUCH BENEVOLENCE...
IN THE NAME OF THE BODHISATTVA GUANYIN-

THE TIME SPENT WITH HIM HAS MADE YILIN EXPERIENCE SOME CURIOUS FEELINGS IN HER HEART

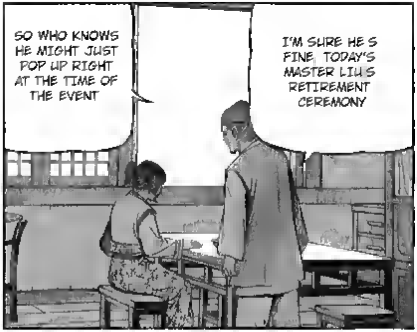
UNBEKNOWNST TO LINGHU CHONG AS HE GRADUALLY DRIFTED OFF TO SLEEP ONCE MORE,

FEELINGS THAT MIGHT JUST TEST HER CONVICTION IN HER FAITH

2 DAYS LATER

I'M TOO WORRIED ABOUT DASHIGE TO SLEEP

WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU NOT HAVE GOOD SLEEP?


SO WHO KNOWS HE MIGHT JUST POP UP RIGHT AT THE TIME OF THE EVENT
I'M SURE HE'S FINE. TODAY'S MASTER LIU'S RETIREMENT CEREMONY

THERE'S STILL NO NEWS OF HIM AT ALL

OK.

WASH UP, MASTER IS WAITING FOR US.

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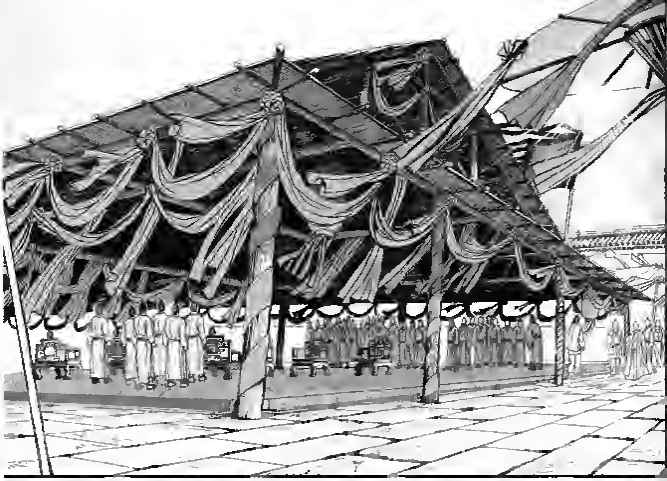
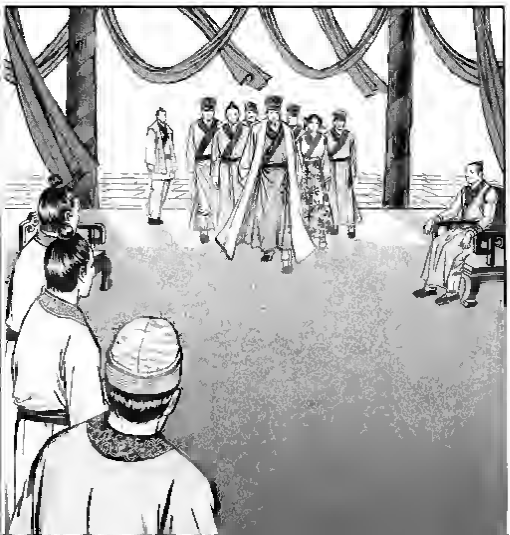
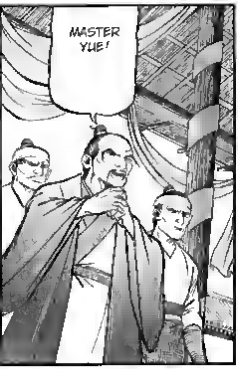




MASTER YUE, HEAD OF MT HUA SECT ARRIVES!

PLEASE DO TAKE A SEAT!

BROTHER YUE!
CONGRATS, BROTHER LIU!


MASTER YUE!

BROTHER YUE!

FELLOW MASTERS!

CONGRATS ON GETTING A NEW DISCIPLE, BROTHER YUE.
.....

CALM DOWN, LIN SHIDI. MASTER ALREADY PROMISED THAT HE'D HELP YOU GET BACK YOUR PARENTS AFTER THE RETIREMENT CEREMONY IS OVER.
YU CHANG-HAI...

YET NOT A SINGLE PERSON FROM MT SONG IS HERE. HOW ODD
MT SONG SECT IS THE LEADER OF OUR ALLIANCE AND THIS IS A MAJOR EVENT

NOTE: IN THE NOVEL, PRIOR TO THIS BIT, THERE IS A SCENE WITH SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TURNING UP AT THE CEREMONY TO CONGRATULATE LIU ZHENGFENG ON HIS RETIREMENT. ONE OF THE OFFICIALS GAVE LIU THE TITLE AND WAS GIVEN SOME GIFTS, IMPLIED TO BE GOLD, IN RETURN.
THANK YOU FOR COMING SUCH A LONG WAY. I TRULY APPRECIATE THAT!
AFTER TODAY'S GOLD BASIN HAND WASHING CEREMONY, I WILL NO LONGER BE INVOLVED IN THE MARTIAL WORLD.
ALSO, THANKS TO THE GREAT KINDNESS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT, I HAVE BEEN AWARDED A SMALL GOVERNMENT POST.
WHAT?!

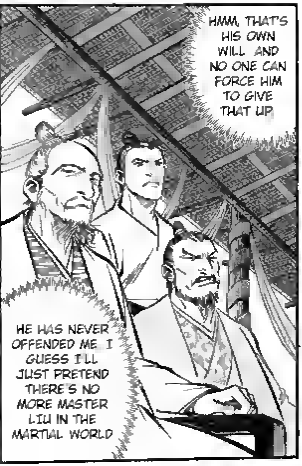
IN THE MARTIAL WORLD, PEOPLE DO THINGS FOLLOWING THE CODE OF CAMARADERIE LOYALTY. BUT TO FULFILL GOVERNMENT DUTIES ONE HAS TO FOLLOW THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SHOW LOYALTY TO HIS MAJESTY
AS THE SAYING GOES ON HIS MAJESTY'S PAYROLL THEN SHOW HIS MAJESTY YOUR LOYALTY

NO WAY!

THAT'S JUST...!

LIU ZHENGFENG WILL BE QUITTING THE MARTIAL WORLD AND I HOPE EVERYONE WILL BEAR WITNESS TO THIS MOMENT
WHEN THERE IS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO IT WOULD PUT ME IN A VERY AWKWARD POSITION. STARTING FROM NOW ON,

SO THE REAL MOTIVATION BEHIND THE RETIREMENT IS SO THAT HE CAN BE A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL!

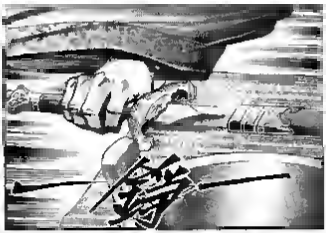

HMM, THAT'S HIS OWN WILL AND NO ONE CAN FORCE HIM TO GIVE THAT UP.
HE HAS NEVER OFFENDED ME. I GUESS I'LL JUST PRETEND THERE'S NO MORE MASTER LIU IN THE MARTIAL WORLD.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY THE HEAD OF THE SECT GREAT MR. MO DID NOT SHOW UP. HE MUST BE QUITE MAD ABOUT IT.
SUCH A BEHAVIOR WOULD REALLY HURT SOUTH HENG SECT'S FAME.

AND YET HERE WE ARE, THE MOMENT ONE OF THEM IS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO BE AN OFFICIAL AND BECOME RICH, HE HAPPILY BOWS DOWN AND SUCK UP TO TAKE IT.
THEY SAY THE FIVE MOUNTAINS SECTS' SWORD ALLIANCE IS ALL ABOUT STANDING FOR CHIVALRY AND JUSTICE.

LUCKILY, OUR SCHOOL STILL HAS MY FELLOW BROTHER MO TO MANAGE THINGS. LIU ZHENGFENG IS JUST MEDIOCRE IN THE SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL WOULDN'T MISS ANYTHING WITHOUT ME.
THANKS TO MY MASTER'S KINDNESS, I, LIU ZHENGFENG, WAS TAKEN AS A DISCIPLE OF SOUTH HENG SECT, AND WAS TAUGHT MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS. I AM VERY ASHAMED THAT I COULD NOT EXPAND THE FAME OF THE SECT!

REGARDING DISPUTES AND CLASHES IN THE MARTIAL WORLD OR ARGUMENTS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND CLANS LIU ZHENGFENG WILL NEVER BE INVOLVED AGAIN!
STARTING FROM NOW ON, AFTER I WASH MY HANDS IN THE GOLD BASIN, I WILL BE FOCUSING ON MY GOVERNMENTAL CAREER. I WILL NEVER USE THE MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS I LEARNED FROM MY MASTER TO WORK TOWARD MY PROMOTION!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IF I EVER BREAK MY PROMISE LET IS BE KNOWN THAT I WILL END UP LIKE THIS SWORD!

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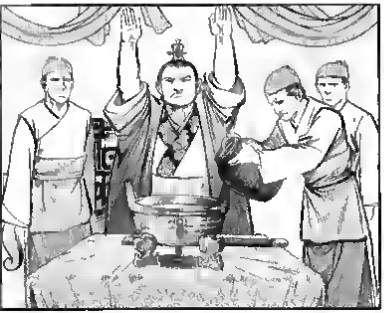
THIS LIU ZHENGFENG'S MARTIAL ARTS IS TOP NOTCH!
LET THE CEREMONY BEGIN!



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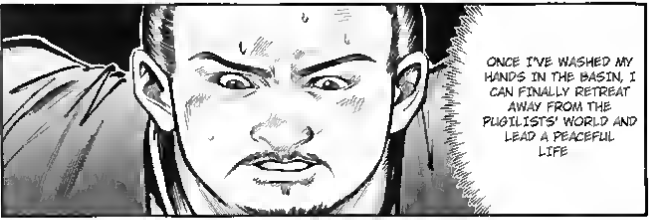
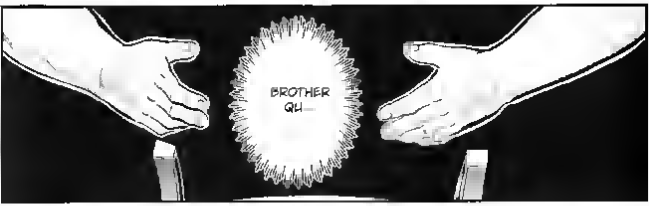

ONCE I'VE WASHED MY HANDS IN THE BASIN, I CAN FINALLY RETREAT AWAY FROM THE PUGILISTS' WORLD AND LEAD A PEACEFUL LIFE


BROTHER QU—

STOP! IN THE NAME OF THE FIVE MOUNTAINS SWORD SECTS ALLIANCE CHIEF'S COMMAND FLAG, STOP AT ONCE!